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Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2296 (2016), by which the Council extended the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) until 30 June 2017 and requested me to report, every 90 days, on its implementation. The report provides an update and analysis of the conflict and the political situation and operational environment in Darfur, including the main challenges to the effective implementation of the mandate, from 15 June to 15 September 2016. It also presents the steps taken by UNAMID towards achieving its benchmarks and describes progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, as presented in their joint report of 8 June 2016 (S/2016/510) and endorsed in resolution 2296 (2016). Lastly, the report provides an update on the transfer of tasks to the United Nations country team and the development of an exit strategy for UNAMID.

II. Conflict dynamics and security situation

A. Current trends and conflict dynamics

2. Following the intense fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW) in the Jebel Marra between January and May, there have been only sporadic ground skirmishes, along with reports of aerial bombardments in the same area, since June. A seasonal spike in violence between pastoralists and farmers occurred in Darfur amid a fall in the number of large-scale intercommunal clashes. Incidents of crime, including banditry, attacks on internally displaced persons and sexual and gender-based violence, remained a significant driver of insecurity throughout Darfur.

Fighting between government forces and rebel groups

3. As a result of its recent air and ground military operations, the Government of the Sudan partially succeeded in limiting the area of operations of SLA/AW by dislodging its combatants from several of its bases in the foothills of the Jebel

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Marra. However, SLA/AW continued to maintain pockets of presence in areas close to Sortony, North Darfur, and prevented the takeover by the Sudanese Armed Forces of the main mountainous part of the Jebel Marra in Central Darfur, in particular the area east of Nertiti, south of Golo, and between Rockero and Golo.

4. To secure unhindered freedom of movement near the bases captured from SLA/AW in Kutum and Sarrong, the army launched several attacks on rebel positions from those areas. On 20 June, the army attempted to capture Kwila, 20 km northeast of Nertiti in Central Darfur. SLA/AW retaliated with an attack against an army base in Boldon, Central Darfur, 18 km southeast of Nertiti. On 27 June, government forces attacked SLA/AW locations in Tui and Korambe in North Darfur, 3 km east of Sortony. In apparent support for the army and to prevent SLA/AW forces from securing logistical supplies, armed Arabs, mostly from the Northern Rezeigat tribe, and some suspected of being members of the Rapid Support Forces, continued to maintain a watchful presence to monitor the road between Kabkabiyah and Sortony in North Darfur.

5. Notwithstanding the Government's announcement on 30 June of a unilateral ceasefire, intermittent skirmishes between the army and SLA/AW continued throughout July and August. On 7 August, the army conducted aerial bombardments targeting SLA/AW positions in the areas of Konda and Boranga, 20 km east of Nertiti. SLA/AW forces reportedly retaliated with an attack against an army position in Kutum, east of Nertiti, on 8 August. Army aircraft reportedly carried out further aerial bombardments in Boldon on 27 August. UNAMID was unable to verify those reports, including the number of casualties reported in the media, owing to the repeated refusal of the Government to grant access to the area, citing security reasons.

6. There was no military engagement between the army and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) or the Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minnawi (SLA/MM).

Local conflicts and intercommunal violence

7. There was an overall reduction in the number of intercommunal security incidents, in particular as a result of the more effective involvement of the native administrations and the impact of security measures taken by the state authorities, including the expedient deployment of security forces, the establishment of buffer zones in hot spots and the prevention of the use of compensation money (*diya*) as an extortion tool. With the beginning of the farming season in June, however, disputes over access to land resulted in several security incidents.

8. In West Darfur, on 22 June, the Awlad Janoub subclan of the nomadic Northern Rezeigat clashed with the sedentary Mahadi over land ownership in the Um Tajok area, east of El Geneina, resulting in 23 fatalities, including one soldier, the destruction of 12 Mahadi villages and the displacement of some 7,000 to 8,000 people. Army and police personnel were deployed to the area to contain the situation. Notwithstanding the signing of a peace agreement between the two sides on 22 July, the Mahadi tribal leadership expressed dissatisfaction because of the absence of provisions on compensation (*diya*) and the continued occupation of their land by the Awlad Janoub. On 25 June, Misseriya Jebel and the Awlad Zaid subclan of the Northern Rezeigat clashed over a farming and grazing dispute in Seleah, West

Darfur, resulting in three fatalities. Government forces arrested two persons in relation to the incidents. On 11 August, the Governor of West Darfur State, Khalil Abdalla Mohamed, was relieved of his position by presidential decree, with Fadalmula Haggo, a former parliamentarian from Sennar State, appointed as his successor. According to media sources, the previous Wali's tenure was characterized by several intercommunal security incidents in the state, uneasy relations with the leaders of local communities and a particular irritation on the part of the central authorities at a lack of progress made in facilitating the return of internally displaced persons and refugees from Chad.

9. In Central Darfur, following an alleged cattle-rustling incident by armed militiamen on 20 and 21 June, 17,000 persons fled Thur and Thur East and sought refuge near an army base in the area. Ten people were reportedly killed and many others injured. Relative calm returned after the native administration returned most of the cattle to their owners. On 4 July, following a cattle-rustling incident involving suspected SLA/AW members, armed Nawaiba abducted five Fur in Kude Mara, north-east of Nertiti. The kidnapped persons were released on 18 July following the intervention of a local conflict resolution committee, the traditional leadership and state authorities. The Fur and Nawaiba agreed that local farmers would have unrestricted access to land in the area.

10. In South Darfur, Fallata herders, aided by the Rezeigat, attacked Massalit farmers in Um Assal, west of Graida, South Darfur, killing three of the latter group and preventing other farmers from gaining access to farmland. Government forces were immediately deployed to the area to contain the tension and arrested seven suspects. On 20 July, under the facilitation of the Governor of South Darfur, the leaders of the two groups signed another cessation of hostilities agreement, committing themselves to implementing the terms of their previous accords from September 2015 and May 2016 and the state authorities' decrees aimed at facilitating a peaceful migration and farming season. On 22 and 27 August, however, the situation deteriorated once again, with Fallata herders attacking Massalit farmers in the Towiel and Nabbagaya areas located, respectively, east and west of Graida, resulting in the death of 9 Massalit and 2 government police personnel and injuries to 12 people. In North Darfur, on 14 August, Arab militias attacked Zaghawa herders in Ba'ashim, north-west of Mellit, killing three of them, injuring two, abducting five and stealing livestock.

11. In East Darfur, the conflict over land ownership between the Southern Rezeigat and the Ma'alia remains unresolved. However, notwithstanding the continuation of security incidents between the two communities relating to cattle-rustling, the swift intervention of their local leadership, as well as the presence of government forces in the area, prevented a further escalation of violence. On 1 and 2 August, cattle-rustling-related fighting between the Agarba subgroup of the Ma'alia and the Southern Rezeigat in the Keil Keili area, East Darfur, led to five fatalities and seven injuries. Under the facilitation of the Government, the two groups signed a peace agreement in Mugʻad, West Kordofan, on 27 August to end the fighting. On 3 September, however, representatives of all the Ma'alia subclans protested against the agreement in Adilla, claiming that it was not inclusive of the entire Ma'alia community and that it had not been signed by the actual representatives of the Agarba.

12. Moreover, the Government's attempts to impose security measures and address the consequences of the fighting in April in East Darfur resulted in an increase in tensions with both groups. On 28 June, after the fatal shooting of a soldier in Ed Daein, the army aborted an attempt to apprehend Southern Rezeigat militiamen suspected of involvement in the attack on the Governor's residence. On 4 July, nine army personnel were killed in heavy exchanges of fire with Southern Rezeigat militiamen in the area between Um Waragat and Jawazat, west of Ed Daein. Amid reports of the further mobilization of Southern Rezeigat militias in the area, the Governor of East Darfur announced on 6 July that those involved in the attacks in April would not be prosecuted. On 10 July, Ma'alia young people held a protest in Adilla without incident against the Governor's decision and to demand the release of their own kin being held by state authorities for various offences.

Crime and banditry

Criminal incidents targeting internally displaced persons

13. A total of 38 criminal incidents targeting internally displaced persons, including murder, rape and abductions, perpetrated by opportunistic criminals or ethnic militias were reported to the UNAMID police. In some cases, the murders and rape formed part of a broader strategy of intimidation directed against the displaced population in order to prevent them from undertaking farming activities outside the camps in their areas of origin. In cases of abductions, government authorities and Arab leaders have often taken action and negotiated the release of the victims.

14. UNAMID continued to patrol both inside and outside displacement camps and gathering sites to serve as a deterrent to criminals and to offer protection to their residents. The mission maintained a continuous presence in the displacement sites to monitor and address issues concerning the safety and security of displaced persons. Incidents of crime affecting internally displaced persons are also being reported systematically to government law enforcement agencies and authorities by UNAMID. In many cases, however, effective investigations were not conducted or criminal cases were not opened.

Criminal incidents affecting other civilians

15. A total of 335 criminal incidents and 79 fatalities were recorded, compared with 435 incidents and 92 fatalities during the previous reporting period. Those comprised murder (48 cases), armed robbery (39 cases), attempted robbery (7 cases), assault/harassment (96 cases), burglary/break-ins (19 cases), looting (3 cases), abduction (11 cases), arson (1 case), shooting (62 cases), attack/ambush (9 cases), threat (7 cases), livestock theft (30 cases) and others (3 cases).

16. Crime fell in the main towns in Darfur thanks to some measures taken by the Governors, such as the banning of motorcycles and the carrying of arms by unauthorized persons in the cities, as well as the deployment of additional government security forces. Violence and organized crime in rural areas also remained issues of serious concern and a key challenge to the restoration of the rule of law and security.

B. Political developments

Road map agreement and talks on cessation of hostilities

17. Some progress was made in the various processes aimed at resolving the conflicts in the Sudan, including Darfur. During meetings held in Paris from 18 to 21 July, the opposition groups under the umbrella of the "Sudan Call", notwithstanding their initial persistent refusals to sign the road map agreement brokered by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel in March, agreed in principle to sign the document, contingent on the following conditions being met: a pre-dialogue meeting with the Government in Addis Ababa on requirements and modalities for the conduct of an inclusive national dialogue, an independent and neutral person to chair the dialogue and a guarantee of the Government's commitment to implementing its outcomes.

18. On 8 August, the Sudan Call signed the road map agreement in Addis Ababa, which the Government had already signed on 21 March. The signatories included two Darfur rebel movements, JEM and SLA/MM. As endorsed by the parties, the agreement is aimed at paving the way towards ending the war in Darfur and the Two Areas and addressing the urgent humanitarian needs and root causes of the conflicts. In addition to those substantive objectives, the road map is designed to facilitate a sequence of negotiation processes that would address the main areas of dispute between the Government and the opposition through a genuine and inclusive national dialogue. The main opposition groups continuously rejected a Khartoum-based national dialogue conference, to which they were invited by the Government, arguing that the process had been manipulated by the ruling National Congress Party. They have also insisted that any peace agreement should be national in nature and carried out within the framework of a political reform process involving all opposition forces, rather than through separate talks on Darfur and the Two Areas.

National Dialogue

19. On 6 August, during a meeting of the general assembly of the national dialogue in Khartoum, the President of the Sudan, Omar Al-Bashir, instructed the coordination committee of the assembly to quickly reach a consensus on the recommendations made in February 2016 by the six subcommittees before the convening of the all-party conference on 10 October. The recommendations of the subcommittees addressed issues relating to the system of governance and transitional arrangements, Sudanese identity and freedoms and basic rights.

C. Humanitarian situation

20. By the end of August, according to the United Nations humanitarian country team and its partners, some 80,600 people, mainly women and children, had been newly displaced across Darfur since the beginning of 2016, owing mainly to the fighting in the Jebel Marra. An additional 117,400 people, who are yet to be verified, owing to lack of access, were also reportedly displaced. Concurrently, some 59,000 were reported to have since returned.

21. North Darfur hosted the majority of verified internally displaced persons (52,912), followed by South Darfur (22,445) and Central Darfur (5,023). In North Darfur, there were no new arrivals reported since the previous reporting period and the number slightly decreased (from 58,000) following the results of a World Food Programme (WFP) head count conducted in Sortony and Tawila. In South Darfur, the International Organization for Migration and WFP conducted door-to-door verifications in Kass, Otash camp, Mershing, Menawashei and Malam. In Central Darfur, verifications and registrations were possible only in the Hasahisa and Hamidiya camps.

22. Up to 110,500 unverified internally displaced persons have been reported in Central Darfur. The Humanitarian Aid Commission and other sources indicated that 58,000 people had been displaced to or affected in Thur, Guldo, Golo and Nertiti and the Nertiti North camp. Up to 45,000 people are also still reported to be displaced in the Boori and Wadi Boori area, and confirmation of such reports is still not possible owing to lack of access. Some 12,500 people were reportedly displaced in Zalingei (Hasahisa and Hamidiya camps), Daya, Fanga Suk and Rockero, of whom only some 5,000 in Zalingei had been verified. In South Darfur, some 2,900 people have recently reached Kass and are reported as displaced from Thur by the Commission, while a reported 800 people remain inaccessible in Deribat owing to a lack of humanitarian access.

23. Authorities reported the presence of some 148,000 returnees in need of humanitarian assistance in Golo and that the Government had provided relief items. However, humanitarian partners were yet to verify the return and could not confirm its voluntary nature, owing to access restrictions.

24. In addition, in Hajar Bukes, West Darfur, an incident that involved the killing of a villager and the burning of 16 houses led to the displacement of some 1,500 persons to Um Tajok, according to the Humanitarian Aid Commission and UNAMID, and an additional 1,000 people fled to another village within the locality. On 30 July, a team comprising international non-governmental organizations, the Sudanese Red Crescent Society and the Commission conducted a needs assessment of the displaced within the Um Tajok area and indicated that approximately 1,600 were in the town itself. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is still corroborating additional information on population movements. Reportedly, when Um Tajok residents returned, they found their land already occupied.

25. Between July and August, an estimated 46,200 people in North, South and West Darfur, including both internally displaced persons and host communities, were affected by flooding. The Kalma and Al Salam camps in South Darfur and the Shangil Tobaya camp in North Darfur are among the worst affected. Flood contingency plans for North, South and West Darfur projected that an estimated 85,000 people would be affected. The ongoing humanitarian response is hampered by access challenges and intercommunal tensions.

26. By the end of July, some 65,000 South Sudanese (both verified and estimated) fleeing fighting in Raja and Wau areas or conflict and food insecurity in the Bahr el Ghazal region arrived in East, South and North Darfur. Most of those refugees moved to nine locations in East Darfur, while an estimated 5,300 went to North Darfur and 5,600 to South Darfur. For various reasons, including stringent

restrictions of movement imposed by the Government, not all refugees were accessible and verification of their numbers and responding to their needs remained challenging.

D. Operating environment

Attacks and restrictions of movement on and denials of access to the mission

27. Criminals and armed gangs continued to target UNAMID personnel and property. A total of 16 criminal incidents, comprising 9 break-ins/burglaries/theft attempts, 2 incidents of trespassing and 1 armed attack, were recorded, compared with 20 incidents during the previous reporting period. On 28 June, 16 armed men attacked two UNAMID security individual contractors who were guarding a water point in Labado, East Darfur, robbing them of their personal effects and stealing a generator.

28. Government security personnel continued to impose restrictions on UNAMID air and ground movement. In South Darfur, government security agencies denied access to 37 ground patrols in and around Nyala in July and August, arguing that the mission's use of armoured personnel carriers created an impression of insecurity in the area. In Central Darfur, UNAMID remained without full and unhindered access to conflict areas in the Jebel Marra, preventing it from verifying reports of ground and aerial attacks. Furthermore, from 21 to 27 August, army personnel denied security clearance for UNAMID to conduct regular night patrols from its team sites in Zalingei and Nertiti, Central Darfur. In North Darfur, the road between Kabkabiyah and Sortony remained blocked by Arab militias, with a considerable adverse impact on UNAMID and humanitarian operations, including the provision of assistance to internally displaced persons. In its engagement with UNAMID, the state government maintained that the blockade was attributable to the alleged presence of SLA/AW elements at the Sortony gathering site for internally displaced persons and the repeated theft of livestock from Arab nomads. UNAMID continues to engage with the authorities on those restrictions.

Attacks and restrictions of movement on and denials of access to humanitarian actors

29. Five incidents against humanitarian actors (three United Nations agencies and two international non-governmental organizations) were recorded. On 16 June, eight armed men attacked the Khor Omer camp for internally displaced persons in East Darfur, resulting in the theft of a UNICEF-provided 10,000-litre water bladder and damage to two others.

30. Overall, the humanitarian operating environment remained extremely challenging owing to insecurity and government-imposed bureaucratic hurdles. Since the adoption of the 2016 directives and procedures for humanitarian action, travel permits to Darfur are issued only for a maximum duration of six months and instances of the attempted imposition of specific national operating partners have been recorded. Securing travel permits to areas outside the state capitals remained challenging owing to, among other issues, the lack of state-level procedural frameworks prescribing clear time frames and roles of different authorities.

31. Rebel-held areas in the Jebel Marra remained cut off from humanitarian access. Since the beginning of hostilities there, access to some areas in Darfur, including Thur, Deribat, Golo, Guldo and Rockero, has been restricted. Furthermore, access to the Jebel Marra was complicated by the decision to handle access requests to some locations there through the Humanitarian Aid Commission at the federal level. The humanitarian community made numerous attempts, without success, to conduct comprehensive multisector assessment missions to affected locations, including Guldo, Golo, Thur, Boori and Wadi Boori. Where access was permitted, stringent control measures affected the ability to conduct independent assessments and deliver assistance. For example, on 3 August, a field visit to Golo, led by the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator for Darfur, with the participation of UNAMID, members of the United Nations country team and government representatives at the federal and local levels, was permitted to remain on the ground only for a few hours.

32. While an emergency food distribution was carried out by WFP in Fanga Suk, Nertiti and Thur, lack of access and administrative restrictions prevented food distribution in Guldo, Rockero or Golo, and delayed non-food item distribution in Guldo and Thur.

Visas and customs clearances

33. A total of 492 visas were approved, the majority of which were for UNAMID contractors and police personnel. As at 12 September, 83 visa requests were pending from those submitted since January.

34. While the Human Rights Section has not been granted any visas since the beginning of 2016 and the vacancy rate remained at 57 per cent, the vacancy rates in the Communications and Public Information (24 per cent), the Security and Safety Section (12 per cent), the Joint Operations Centre (23 per cent) and the Protection of Civilians Section (17 per cent) were lower than during the previous reporting period. The visa request for the Chief of the Protection of Civilians Section remains outstanding. In the 2016/17 budget, the General Assembly abolished 10 posts that had remained vacant for more than three years owing to visa denials, which included those of Senior Women Protection Adviser and the Senior Planning Officer.

35. With the new staff selection and managed mobility system for the Political, Peace and Humanitarian Network, which took effect at the Secretariat on 15 January, the filling of vacant positions of staff members in the Professional and higher categories, up to and including the D-2 level, experienced severe delays. As a consequence, no selection processes for substantive personnel in UNAMID were completed in 2016, which affected the number of visa applications submitted.

36. Following technical-level meetings between UNAMID and the Government on 15 June, 27 July and 7 August, 271 food ration containers were released from Port Sudan, while 59 shipments (101 containers) are still pending clearance. A total of 367 shipments of United Nations-owned equipment and contingent-owned equipment, some of which had been there since April 2015, remained at Port Sudan and Khartoum, pending customs clearance. The resulting shortages severely hampered the ability of UNAMID troops to communicate, conduct robust patrols and protect civilians, and incurred demurrage charges and additional costs for troop-contributing countries and police-contributing countries and the United Nations.

III. Mandate implementation

A. Support for an inclusive peace process

High-level mediation

37. On 11 July, at a meeting facilitated by the United States Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, the Joint Special Representative/Joint Chief Mediator met the leader of SLA/AW, Abdul Wahid al-Nur, in Paris to persuade him to rejoin the Darfur peace process. Mr. al-Nur agreed to convene a meeting of the leaders of his movement in mid-September to deliberate in that regard. He requested UNAMID to assist with logistical arrangements for the meeting. Repeated requests notwithstanding, he is yet to provide further details on such a meeting.

38. Following the signing of the road map agreement, talks on a cessation of hostilities in Darfur between JEM and SLA/MM and the Government began on 9 August. The former President of Nigeria, Abdulsalami Abubakar, chaired the talks on Darfur, while the UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative (Political) served as the facilitator. The discussions focused on a draft cessation of hostilities, which had previously been discussed in Debre Zeyit, Ethiopia, on 25 January.

39. On 14 August, the talks were suspended until further notice, following disagreements between the parties on the disclosure of locations of rebel forces, the role of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur as the basis for subsequent political negotiations, the need for a new joint supervisory structure for humanitarian operations and the release of prisoners of war. Talks between the Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North, which took place simultaneously, were also suspended until further notice owing to disagreements over the modalities for the delivery of humanitarian aid in the Two Areas.

40. From 1 to 4 September, as a follow-up to talks, the Deputy Joint Special Representative (Political) held consultations with the leaders of JEM and SLA/MM in Kampala. Both movements restated the areas of contention in the talks and indicated that, if the necessary flexibility were demonstrated by both parties on the release of prisoners of war and the mechanism for the oversight of humanitarian assistance, an agreement could be reached in the near future. The Deputy Joint Special Representative (Political) also met representatives of the Government of Uganda and sought its support in urging the two movements to sign the cessation of hostilities document and seek a political process that would result in a negotiated peace in Darfur. Upon his return to the Sudan, the Deputy Joint Special Representative (Political) met the chief negotiator for Darfur to urge the Government to consider the requests to release prisoners of war.

Doha Document for Peace in Darfur

41. On 7 September, the President of Chad, Idriss Deby Itno, the Amir of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, and the President of the Central African Republic, Faustin Archange Touadera, took part in a ceremony organized by the Government to mark the end of the Darfur Regional Authority. At the ceremony, the President of the Sudan did not provide any further clarification regarding the successor arrangements to the Authority, except to say that the Government would continue to

implement development projects in Darfur. A formal decree on the establishment of successor arrangements to the Authority has yet to be announced.

42. On 2 August, the European Union signed an agreement to support the Darfur internal dialogue and consultation process with 800,000 euros. The contribution is expected to support the holding of 15 locality-level meetings in Darfur and 1 among refugees in Chad. With regard to the resumption of 28 locality-level meetings with the funds contributed by the Government of the Sudan in 16 March, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed an agreement with the implementing partners on 2 August. With the disbursement of the funds at the locality level, consultations were held in Bileil on 1 and 2 September and in El Fasher on 7 and 8 September.

43. UNAMID provided technical and logistical support to the planned demobilization of 800 former combatants from the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur signatory movements and to the outstanding Darfur Peace Agreement caseload in Central Darfur. The community-based reintegration of 700 former combatants (500 in North Darfur and 200 in West Darfur) demobilized by UNAMID continued. Further planning by the Government began for the reintegration of an additional 1,000 former combatants.

44. On civilian disarmament, the Government developed a phased plan to address the proliferation of small arms in Darfur. The phases included awareness-raising, arms registration and marking, the voluntary surrender of arms tied with "arms for development" and possible forced disarmament. The final plan would be shared with UNAMID and relevant partners to solicit their technical and financial support. Some states, such as North and South Darfur, however, remain at different stages in terms of discussing their plans and implementing pilot disarmament efforts. The Community Stabilization Section of the mission continued to engage with the Sudan Demobilization Disarmament and Reintegration Commission and other relevant stakeholders to discuss strategies of disarmament that take into consideration the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards.

B. Protection of civilians

45. In its resolution 2296 (2016), the Security Council endorsed the recommendations of the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, as presented in their joint report (S/2016/510), for UNAMID to focus its activities on ensuring the protection of internally displaced persons and addressing intercommunal violence. UNAMID concentrated its protection of civilian efforts on risk-prone locations, supporting durable solutions where conditions were appropriate, increasing cooperation with the United Nations country team and humanitarian country team and placing a greater emphasis on early warning and response, monitoring and evaluation and training activities.

46. The focus on the protection of internally displaced persons also included preparations for a mapping, in coordination with the United Nations country team, of the protection situation of camps, areas at risk of further displacement and potential areas of return across Darfur. A team of experts is ready to conduct the mapping, but is awaiting the issuance of visas. Specific emphasis was also placed on

enhancing early warning and response mechanisms and the joint protection of civilian coordination structures to resolve and/or prevent intertribal and intratribal conflicts.

47. As part of those efforts, integrated field protection teams were established across five sectors to work closely with local communities and to provide, among other things, early warning information, which is essential for better informing the provision of patrols in support of vulnerable civilians, primarily women and girls, in conducting livelihood activities, and undertaking coordinated and integrated rapid interventions in emergency protection of civilian situations. Furthermore, joint protection groups at mission headquarters and sector levels and new United Nations humanitarian civil-military coordination were established to enhance information-sharing, logistical arrangements with regard to the provision of escorts and other logistical assistance to humanitarian partners.

Provision of physical protection

48. UNAMID continued to focus on providing targeted responses to civilians under threat in conflict-affected areas. The mission actively engaged with the Government and worked in coordination with the country team to address those specific protection issues. Notwithstanding those efforts, intercommunal violence continued to adversely affect civilians, causing death, injury, displacement and the destruction of livelihood.

49. Tensions remained particularly high in Sortony, North Darfur, in the aftermath of the Northern Rezeigat attack on newly displaced Fur in May. On 15 July and 25 August, UNAMID troops prevented the entry into the gathering site for internally displaced persons of a group of armed Arabs claiming the need to recover their animals that had previously been stolen. As part of efforts to address the situation, UNAMID leadership actively engaged with the authorities. The mission also maintained its military and police presence to conduct day and night patrols in order to respond to security needs, in particular those of women and children engaged in livelihood activities outside the gathering site.

50. As a follow-up to the major intercommunal violence that had occurred in several parts of West Darfur and Central Darfur since May, UNAMID integrated field protection teams conducted assessments and verification visits to the affected areas to identify early warning threats that could affect civilians. The teams visited Um Tajok and Habila in West Darfur and Thur in Central Darfur and interacted with the local communities and authorities on measures to address protection threats.

51. UNAMID conducted a total of 22,298 patrols comprising 8,145 routine patrols, 9,634 short-range patrols, 372 long-range patrols, 2,689 night patrols, 355 humanitarian escorts and 1,103 logistical and administrative escorts covering 7,125 villages and 2,666 camps for internally displaced persons. Patrols continued to play a key role in the protection of civilians by gathering early warning information and the planning of an appropriate response to emerging protection threats.

Logistical and security support for humanitarian operations

52. From 1 June to 12 September, UNAMID military personnel provided 418 round-trip escorts for partners providing humanitarian assistance and monitoring the humanitarian and protection situation, mostly in North Darfur. In addition, between 1 June and 31 August, UNAMID formed police units provided 65 humanitarian escorts, mainly in South Darfur and Central Darfur, including for the delivery of food and non-food items.

Promoting a protective environment

53. A total of 402 criminal cases were reported to UNAMID, leading to 77 arrests by the Sudanese police, compared with 336 cases reported during the same period in 2015. The UNAMID police component continued to carry out its community policing initiatives and to strengthen professional skills for 248 Sudanese police officers (226 men and 22 women), in addition to training for community policing volunteers.

54. As part of crime prevention initiatives in camps for internally displaced persons, 454 joint patrols were conducted with 711 community policing volunteers (658 men and 53 women). In addition, UNAMID held 138 awareness-raising sessions for 6,340 internally displaced persons (2,519 men, 2,323 women and 1,498 children) on sexual and gender-based violence and safety and security issues, with an emphasis on the importance of reporting criminal cases to the police and seeking medical treatment for the victims.

55. A total of 606 visits were conducted to police stations and detention centres to monitor the conditions of children in juvenile detention centres and those living with their mothers in such facilities. Moreover, 22 workshops were conducted on gender mainstreaming, sexual exploitation and abuse and livelihood skills for 374 internally displaced persons (307 men and 67 women) and 141 English classes were conducted for 3,240 others (1,683 men and 1,557 women). Those activities contributed to strengthening the relationship between the Sudanese police, community policing volunteers and internally displaced persons with the UNAMID police, enhancing the capacity of the participants and improving access to justice and the rule of law.

56. UNAMID documented 117 new cases of human rights violations and abuses involving 303 victims, including 32 children, compared with 120 incidents involving 387 victims during the previous reporting period. Violations of the right to life accounted for 35 cases involving 65 victims, including 6 children. Violations of the right to physical integrity accounted for 45 cases involving 167 victims, including 1 child. Sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence in the form of rape, accounted for 18 cases involving 31 victims, including 24 children). A total of 11 cases of arbitrary arrests and illegal detention involving 25 victims were documented. There were eight abductions involving 15 victims. UNAMID confirmed 77 cases of human rights violations and abuses, while the remaining 40 cases could not be verified owing to access restrictions. From the 117 reported incidents, 21 cases involving 69 victims were reported to have been perpetrated by government security forces and "allied groups". The

remaining 96 cases, with 234 victims, were allegedly perpetrated by unidentified armed men often described by the victims as Arabs.

57. On 31 July, the National Intelligence and Security Service reportedly arrested at least 15 individuals from various camps for internally displaced persons in Central Darfur, following their meeting with the United States Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan during his visit to Darfur. On 12 August, the United States Department of State expressed concern about the reported detention of those individuals and called upon the Government to have them released immediately. UNAMID also raised concerns about the alleged arrests. As at 15 September, seven of the detainees had been released.

58. From 15 to 30 June, UNAMID, in collaboration with the prisons directorate, trained 150 prison officials in standard operating procedures to facilitate their application by the prison service, in particular with regard to security. In addition, the mission, through its quick-impact project, provided two 45,000-litre underground water tanks to Ardamata prison in sector west.

59. From 11 to 14 July, UNAMID conducted a fact-finding mission to El Daein prison in East Darfur in response to persistent reports of deplorable and life-threatening conditions, congestion and a recent escape by prisoners. The mission reported that 42 women inmates (38 convicted and 4 awaiting trial), accompanied by 12 children under 2 years of age had been detained in a cell with a holding capacity of 15 inmates, which violates international standards. In coordination with the United Nations country team and state authorities, UNAMID proposed the use of a quick-impact project to address the situation and provide more space.

60. In July, UNAMID received information from the Office of the Special Prosecutor for the crimes committed in Darfur, in Nyala, that 14 cases of murder, robbery, the illegal possession of weapons and ammunition and alleged terrorist crimes were being investigated, with 7 already being prosecuted.

61. With respect to sexual exploitation and abuse, a capacity-building and training programme was complemented by the launch of the campaign entitled "Protect children/support efforts of UNAMID: no sexual relations with minors". A total of 50,000 pocket cards were printed for distribution to staff members with a message of the Secretary-General, translated into 12 languages, prohibiting sexual activity with persons under 18 years of age, regardless of the age of consent locally. Banners and posters carrying the same message were displayed on mission premises.

62. The programme was extended to national institutions and host communities, benefiting 1,879 participants (1,141 women and 738 men), comprising 153 police officers, 52 military officers and 1,674 internally displaced persons and others, including child protection focal points. Ongoing monitoring activities confirmed that more efforts were needed to create a more protective environment, while promoting local ownership of the protection of children in anticipation of a possible future withdrawal of UNAMID from Darfur.

63. Advocacy meetings to prevent the recruitment of child soldiers and the use of children as combatants in communal clashes, as well as to discuss the continued roll-out of the campaign "No child soldier: protect Darfur", were successfully held in the Al Salam camp for internally displaced persons and in Nertiti in Central

Darfur, the Krinding camp in West Darfur and the Otash and Kalma camps and Manawashe in South Darfur. While concerted efforts to curb the recruitment of child soldiers in Darfur have made significant progress, the potential use of children in ethnic clashes remains a major concern.

64. UNAMID continued to facilitate, support and promote gender mainstreaming in all its operations through the training of 695 peacekeepers, including 110 women, on gender mainstreaming and sexual and gender-based violence. In addition, as part of the follow-up to the recommendations made during International Women's Day in 2016, UNAMID trained 15 senior women government officials on advocacy and communication skills.

65. The mission continued to address the threat of explosive remnants of war. General assessments of explosive hazards were conducted in 18 villages in Darfur (7 in Sector North, 3 in Sector South, 5 in Sector West, 1 in Sector Central and 2 in Sector East), where clearance teams destroyed 1,165 items of unexploded ordnance and 225,728 items of small arms ammunition. The destruction of those explosive remnants contributed to creating a safer environment for communities, mission patrols and humanitarian partners.

66. UNAMID conducted 365 awareness-raising sessions on the risk of explosive remnants of war for 29,531 beneficiaries (4,786 men, 5,073 women, 10,517 boys and 9,155 girls). The sessions were held in high-priority areas with a high level of such remnants and a high concentration of internally displaced persons who had fled from armed hostilities in the Jebel Marra. UNAMID also provided awareness training on the recognition of explosive remnants of war and on firearms safety to 38 mission police officers. In support of national capacity enhancement efforts, it provided training on the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines to 12 government police officers in El Geneina, West Darfur, on 16 June.

C. Local conflict mediation

67. Further to Security Council resolution 2296 (2016), UNAMID began to implement a new mission-wide strategy to address intercommunal violence in Darfur. The strategy establishes internal mechanisms for the coordination of the efforts of the mission and United Nations country team in this regard, at both Headquarters and the sector level, and external ones for coordination with the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission and state governments. The strategy will be implemented on the basis of state-specific action plans that are being developed and that will define immediate-term, medium-term and long-term priority areas for the mission's prevention, mitigation and conflict-resolution activities.

68. To prevent seasonal intercommunal violence and to ensure a peaceful farming season, UNAMID held 31 meetings with various stakeholders across Darfur, including the native administrations, peaceful coexistence and agricultural protection committees, farmers and herders, local authorities and community leaders. The meetings focused on defining and implementing preventive measures to avoid clashes between farmers and herders, including outreach and dialogue forums, social peace awareness campaigns, the demarcation of livestock migration routes and community projects.

69. UNAMID continued to work closely with state governments and community leaders in an effort to support the peaceful resolution of intercommunal conflicts. In South Darfur, it supported the implementation and dissemination of agreements signed between the Massalit and Fallata, Misseriya and Rezeigat, Zaghawa Umkamalti and Zaghawa Rotana and Ta'aisha and Salamat. Following a two-day social peace conference that was held in Shattaya, south-west of Kass, South Darfur, an area that had witnessed considerable tensions between nomads and internally displaced farmers over the past three years, a comprehensive peace agreement was signed on 13 August between the leaders of the Beni Halba, Dajo, Fur, Khuzam, Misseriya and Zaghawa, facilitated by the First Vice-President, the Governor of South Darfur and UNAMID. The agreement provided for the return of all farmland and houses to their rightful owners, the deployment of government forces and rule of law institutions in the area and other measures to encourage peaceful coexistence and the return of internally displaced persons.

70. In the aftermath of the violence between Fur and Nawaiba in Nertiti, Central Darfur, early in July, UNAMID engaged with the peaceful coexistence committee, the agriculture protection committee, the native administration and the local authorities to successfully resolve the dispute and to secure the return of the kidnapped Fur. Since July, UNAMID participated in and facilitated the work of a conflict committee to resolve the land dispute between the Shabtiyah, a subclan of the Northern Rezeigat, and the Zaghawa in the Kolgay area, west of El Fasher in Tawila locality. The committee engaged with both communities to ensure their peaceful coexistence and is expected to prepare recommendations to the Governor of North Darfur for that purpose. In an effort to prevent further conflict between the Northern Rezeigat and internally displaced Fur in Sortony, North Darfur, UNAMID conducted missions and facilitated several meetings between the two groups with a view to defusing tensions.

IV. Implementation of the troop and police-to-task review, transfer of mandated tasks and exit strategy

A. Implementation of the troop and police-to-task review

71. UNAMID continued to operate with 14 battalions, as opposed to the authorized 16, and will be able to fully implement the troop-to-task analysis recommendations only once the remaining battalions are fully deployed in the mission area. The mission, nevertheless, began preparations for the implementation of the recommendations. The Secretariat and the mission intensified their efforts to ensure the deployment of the incoming battalions and the outstanding military utility helicopter unit.

72. The UNAMID police component began internal restructuring at the strategic and operational levels, with stringent control and performance management mechanisms put in place to achieve greater efficiency. In accordance with the recommendations of the review, the police component increased the number of individual police officers at the team site level. A total of 222 officers were deployed to team sites, which increased their ratio in the field by 5 per cent since the review. To address the shortfalls in the operational capabilities of formed police

units, in particular with respect to the protection of civilians and ensuring unhindered humanitarian access, the UNAMID police component encouraged the police-contributing countries to train and equip their personnel to meet the operational requirements and adhere to the serviceability rate of contingency-owned equipment.

B. Transfer of mandated tasks to the United Nations country team

73. UNAMID and the United Nations country team continued the planning process for the gradual transfer of tasks, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2228 (2015). Their periodic coordination meeting was held in El Fasher on 19 July to discuss the joint rule of law programme for Darfur. The programme received a boost thanks to concerted advocacy efforts at donor meetings in Khartoum and New York, under the auspices of UNDP, which resulted in expressions of interest by donors to fund its implementation. UNAMID and the country team continue to hold monthly meetings to discuss how to raise funds and provide technical support for the transitioned gender-related tasks.

C. Exit strategy

74. The Security Council, in its resolution 2296 (2016), requested the Secretary-General to make recommendations, at the end of October 2016, on practical steps required to be taken in order to make tangible progress towards achieving the UNAMID benchmarks. In this context, the African Union, the United Nations and the Government have begun consultations regarding the format, process and objective of the next meeting of the joint working group, which is scheduled to be held in October. As requested by the Council, the Secretary-General will report and make recommendations by 27 October on practical steps to be taken in order to make tangible progress towards achieving the benchmarks, including by building on any recommendations agreed upon by the joint working group.

V. Financial aspects

75. The General Assembly, by its resolution 70/286, appropriated the amount of $1,039.6 million for the maintenance of the Operation for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017.

76. As at 2 September, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNAMID amounted to $730.5 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date amounted to $5,392.8 million. Reimbursement of troop and formed costs has been made for the period up to 30 April 2016, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 31 December 2015, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

VI. Observations

77. The signing by SLA/MM and JEM, as members of the Sudan Call, of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel road map agreement constitutes an important step forward in the Darfur peace process. I commend all the parties to the agreement, the High-level Implementation Panel and UNAMID on this achievement. The faithful implementation of the road map offers a means of addressing the conflicts in the Sudan, including Darfur, and resolving them through a political process. Its success will depend ultimately on the willingness of the parties to abide by its provisions and seize the opportunity to resume negotiations and reach an agreement on the cessation of hostilities and modalities for the provision of humanitarian access. At the same time, those who remain outside the peace process must realize that the interests of the population of Darfur are best served by their full and unreserved participation therein. I therefore urge Abdul Wahid al-Nur, once again, to join the peace process without preconditions.

78. The progress made with the signing of the road map agreement notwithstanding, significant challenges are ahead. Open hostilities have decreased in Darfur overall, but 2.6 million people remain internally displaced. Sustained security will also depend on the level of support that it receives from the people of Darfur and the prosperity that it brings to them. I therefore call upon the government to demonstrate the commitment necessary to finding a sustainable political solution to the conflict that fully addresses its underlying causes.

79. Concerted efforts are still required to address the root causes of the violence, especially land ownership and management. I welcome the increased efforts by the Government to address intercommunal conflicts by facilitating peace agreements and ensuring a government presence in volatile areas. Given the importance of supporting local conflict resolution mechanisms, I call upon the Government to work closely with UNAMID, the United Nations country team and local civil society groups to develop state-specific action plans to prevent and resolve intercommunal conflicts. The support of the international community, including through logistical and technical assistance, will also be necessary in that regard.

80. The situation in Darfur cannot be fully resolved without a strategy that addresses the threat to civilians posed by those carrying weapons and their motives. As long as the militias who fought alongside the Government or rebel movements continue to have no exit strategy of any sort, potential spoilers in Darfur will continue to be in a position to exert their influence over them. Both the regulation and control of weapons and a fair system of land and resource management is the only way to ensure lasting security in Darfur. I urge the Government to make headway in the strengthening of its administration of justice institutions by undertaking the reforms necessary to curtail impunity.

81. I remain concerned about the impact of the denials of access and restrictions of movement imposed on UNAMID personnel and humanitarian actors on the implementation of the mission's mandate and the delivery of humanitarian aid. I reiterate my call upon the Government to ensure unhindered access for UNAMID and humanitarian partners to conflict-affected communities to conduct monitoring and verification missions and deliver humanitarian assistance. I note with satisfaction the relative improvement in the issuance of visas to UNAMID personnel and the

release of ration containers for its troops. However, I am concerned that a significant number of United Nations and contingent-owned equipment remains in Port Sudan, which continues to hamper the operational effectiveness of the mission. I urge the Government, consistent with its obligations under the Status-of-forces agreement, to take urgent steps to remove the bureaucratic impediments and ensure the release of these shipments.

82. I am also deeply concerned about the limited progress made in achieving durable solutions for internally displaced persons. I therefore urge the Government to work with all relevant actors, including the internally displaced, local communities and humanitarian and development actors, to promote the creation of conditions conducive to their voluntary, safe and dignified return and access to basic services.

83. In conclusion, I should like to express my gratitude to the Joint Special Representative/Joint Chief Mediator, Martin Uhomoibhi, the entire mission leadership and personnel of UNAMID, the United Nations country team and humanitarian partners who continue to work tirelessly towards the pursuit of sustainable peace in Darfur in often very difficult conditions. I also should wish to commend my Special Envoy for the Sudan and South Sudan, Nicholas Haysom, and former Presidents Thabo Mbeki and Abdulsalami Abubakar of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel for their continued commitment to sustainable peace and stability in the Sudan.

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